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STUDY GROUP
ON ALIENATION

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Welfare recipients speak for themselves

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WELFARE RECIPIENTS SPEAK

FOR

THEMSELVES

Compiled by members of
The Federal-Provincial Study Group
on Alienation

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1. Introduction

In the survey of welfare recipients, a great eagerness to participate was found in many instances. Here was a group of people even neglected in every other of the many surveys done these days and they seized the opportunity to talk about the things that weighed heavily on their hearts. During the pilot run, the interviewers found it very difficult to terminate the interview after completion of the questionnaire. Since a large scale survey is costed on a pre-determined time required for the completion of each interview, it was obvious that something had to be done about this. It was decided to announce early in the interview that we were interested in anything the respondent might want to add to increase our understanding and that for this purpose we were leaving behind a questionnaire in which they could express themselves if they so wished and mail it in. The purpose of the leave-behind questionnaire is best expressed in the last question on it, which reads, "Now here are two more pages with no questions on them. We think that there are probably a lot of important questions which we haven't asked you, just because we didn't know enough to ask them. Please write down, here, everything else that you think we should know about you, the Welfare System and the problems that occur."

Approximately 25% of the 2,000 recipients interviewed or 500 respondents have sent in this questionnaire. The vast majority of these have written at great length to unburden themselves about their situation.

It should be realized that the people who sent in these questionnaires are probably not representative of the 2,000 recipients who were interviewed. Most of the respondents appear so extremely lonely that the thought of their being representative of the welfare recipient population is appalling. In any event, no attempt was made to do a rigorous content analysis of these questionnaires, but some topics came up again and again and these we shall very briefly discuss.

As was expected, almost all complained about the lack of money for clothing and shelter, but certain themes provide significant insights into what it means to be on welfare. One of the most surprising of these themes was the expression of envy and condemnation of other welfare recipients. It was said of these others that they received more support than the respondent, although their family circumstances were the same and their financial circumstances often better. They condemned other recipients because they did not live as sober and as clean lives as the respondents did, and therefore not only were not deserving of welfare but received it at the expense of those who were deserving, including the respondent. This theme

more than any question on alienation shows the extreme alienation of these people. On the one hand there is no awareness at all of the fact that there may be people worse off than they are, an awareness that takes the edge of the bitterness in the lives of many people. On the other hand no comparisons are made with people who are in the labour force or who 'live off the fat of the land', people who are indeed better off. These people's horizons, therefore, do not take in the community at large. On the contrary, they are on the outside and have stopped looking in, their alienation is total.

As was pointed out these themes of envy and condemnation sharpen the bitterness which is expressed in many other ways as well. At the same time, there is an expression of fear of the larger society and of the welfare system in particular. Actually the fear for these two is closely interrelated since the recipient feels that his every move is being watched and being reported by the general public to the welfare office which gets immediately on their backs. The sense of being on the outside is therefore reenforced by what under different circumstances would have to be called, paranoia.

This, in turn, leads to increased withdrawal. Whatever community resources and facilities are available are not being used and so we find an expression of great boredom as these people are thrown back on their own resources which

are very limited indeed. As if this were not enough, they feel themselves covered with shame or beset by guilt because they are on welfare. It should also be noted, that some people do not consider themselves to be on welfare because they receive a monthly check and do not have to go to the office.

One of our recommendations is that the public assistance function and the service function be separated. The reasons for this recommendation have been given elsewhere. Here we want to draw attention again, however, to the fact that such separation will permit the trained social worker and his case work assistants to concentrate on people who need services. We also recommended that suitable welfare recipients be hired to (among other things) visit other recipients and provide them with information, assist them in making their special needs known to the social worker and in general to provide the very lonely with company and comfort. The respondents show a great need for an acceptance of these particular recommendations as there was frequent expression of the need for contact with somebody from the welfare office who does not come to check up on them, who does not treat them as a number to be processed, who does not moralize, but who comes to help because that is what he is about.

In our research we found that knowledge of the

plight of welfare recipients was often absent and almost always abstract. The Study Group, therefore, decided to collect some statements made by welfare recipients to close this gap in knowledge and understanding. In some instances, the respondent painted so vivid a picture that the Study Group felt that justice could not be done to what was written by simply quoting from it. We have, therefore, included two such responses in their entirety to show what being on welfare is all about in the case of a widow with four children; and in the case of a widower with six. These responses have been copied verbatim; in some of the quotes a few spelling corrections were made, but only if they were required for clarity.

2. What the Recipients Wrote

(a) A Widow With Four Children

Before I tell you what it's like to be on welfare let me tell you how I got on. You see my husband was fired from the railroad, because he was drunk on the job. Actually my man was an alcoholic and he did go down very fast after being fired.

On a cold winternight, just about three years ago, he walked out of the house, loaded, went into the bush, took off his shoes and fell asleep. It took them until the funeral, three days after they found him, to thaw him out so that they could put him into the coffin. He left me four children, a house and the funeral expenses. His family spent \$1,200 on the funeral and when I asked them, what about the children and me, they said, go on welfare they take good care of widows with children.

In those days the neighbours were pretty good. They looked after my baby girl and my four year old and brought hot meals for myself and the other two who were eight and eleven. They also brought lots of pies and brownies; the kids thought they'd never had it so good, dear old dad.

Two weeks after the funeral I went to the Welfare office and told them my story. The clerk said, you aren't the first one who drove her husband over the brink. I let that one pass as I said to myself, might as well get accustomed to being insulted. He didn't like not getting a rise out of me, so he said, you got nothing to say. I told him, listen buster, I'm here because I have four children so just get on with your job or I'll tell my minister. He mumbled something about 'only joking', but you should have seen how quickly he finished the formalities after that.

That was only the beginning. We got a new minister, he gets us a Grade B turkey for Xmas and all the candy kisses my children can manage. My neighbours, they're embarrassed when I talk to them on the street. The grocer, the shoemaker, they all want cash on the barrel; you know how it is, they say. The dentist, he doesn't do welfare people, but he'll pull in an emergency. My family reminds me that I should have never married the bum in the first place and surely there must be some bachelor or widower; his family doesn't even take the trouble to tell me that.

My eldest who is in hi-school is the one that really suffers. The first year in high he brought home along list of things he needed. We were strapped as usual, so I asked the Welfare office. They said, they'd look after it. Next thing you know, my son hears his name called out over the Intercom. It went like this, or so he tells me, what difference does it make, 'The following students can pick up their books and other course materials which have been paid for by the welfare department in the Principal's office.' That night he told me, he'd never go back to school. I talked him out of that as I promised that coming year I would buy all he needed even if it meant dogfood for supper, after all what's good enough for the injuns is good enough for us. He didn't think that was very funny, but he did go back to school.

It's not very good though, he can't buy the shoes and the pants and the shirts that all the other kids wear and not a single girl has ever encouraged him to walk her home. At first I told him he was imagining things when he said that the other kids ignored him; I urged him to go out and play with the other boys. Now I consider myself lucky that he comes home straight from school and does his homework, other kids might have given up. All the same, nobody knows what that boy of mine is going thru. The other night I heard him cry, so I sat beside his bed and stroked his hair. When he had calmed down he said, Mama, I don't know what to do. I said,

neither do I darling, but let's go on doing it. He laughed and fell asleep with a smile on his face; then I cried.

For the other children it's not so bad yet. They're all girls and so the dresses of the eldest can be worn again, and again. The youngest doesn't know the difference, while the middle one thinks it's great, for it shows that she is becoming a big girl. I tremble to think though what will happen when she is a big girl, you can only do so much with a sewing machine.

Once in a while I get visited by my worker. The other day she dropped in as usual unannounced and as if she owned the place. It was my eldest daughter's birthday. I had promised to take her to a Walt Disney movie and to make sure she wouldn't be ashamed of me I had curled my hair. Just before the worker came she had paid me the supreme compliment, Mama, she said, you look so young. When your eleven year old daughter tells you that you look young, believe me you can't help but look radiant. The worker noted it too, well, she said, so it's true, you got a boyfriend. Having had to put up with this sort of thing ever since my husband died, I took it rather lightly and answered, that's terrific, lead me to him. Please be serious, she said, I'm not joking. Neither am I, I said, lead me to him or shut up, please (as an afterthought). I must have looked my old forsaken self when I said that, for she allowed, okay, okay, I guess it was just a rumour, but how come you're all dolled up. So I told her about the birthday and the movie. She advised me to be as inconspicuous as possible lest the rumour mill should grind out more of the same.

You must also know that the house my husband left us is in bad repair. Of course I have no money to get it fixed and I dread the coming winter for the wind and the snow have found more holes than there are doors and windows. Even if our fuel allowance was twice what it is now, we couldn't keep it warm when it is forty below or the wind blows at fifteen or more miles per hour. My worker says, she can't do anything about it, the fuel allowance is fixed. The townclerk, he used to be a good friend of my husband, told me you know I hardly dare to talk to him lest he be compromised, told me that under the Canada Assistance Plan, the Welfare office could pay for the necessary repairs to our home. So I told my worker, but all she said was, maybe, I don't know about that.

How does it feel to be on welfare. It's hard buddy, if it weren't for the children I'd join my husband right now.

(b) Un veuf avec six enfants

Je trouve que c'est essentiel d'avoir l'assistance sociale car sans cela que deviendrions-nous? Il faudrait s'exiler, mourir de faim et de souffrances. Bien des gens en santé se moquent de nous et nous disent que c'est eux qui nous font vivre. Moi j'ai 4 enfants qui travaillent et payent des taxes, impôts etc. etc. Tous nous payons des taxes. Moi j'ai déjà payé gros de taxes. On ne choisit pas ses maladies. Ceux qui se moquent de nous faudrait pas qu'ils passent un an à l'hôpital à souffrir; avec cela, je crois qu'ils réfléchiraient et aussi seraient plus humains. Moi j'aimerais vivre et laisser vivre. J'ai fait de l'hôpital 15 fois - de grosses opérations. J'ai été opéré aux 2 poumons, diabète sucré.... Nous avons eu cancer, polio etc. Je ne parle pas pour rien, j'ai de l'expérience...

L'assistance sociale ne me traite pas justement. J'aurais besoin de bien des choses essentielles, soit remèdes, lingerie etc. Ce sont ceux qui ont le moins de besoins qui reçoivent le plus. Il n'y a pas de justice; bien des différents taux pour les pensions. Ceux qui ont de la protection, amis soit politiques etc., eux, ça va bien. Gros de pensionnés ne disent pas la vérité. Les enquêteurs manquent de savoir vivre et de compétence....

Les députés font gros de promesses le temps des élections, mais les élections passées se fichent de nous; eux ne pensent qu'à leur poche. Il y a trop de députés incompetents qui ne pensent qu'à l'argent et leur poche et leur parenté..... C'est comme le régime Tascheran. Je crois qu'il y a plus de justice en Russie, qu'au Canada. Nos premiers ministres, députés-ministres, sous-ministres se promènent aux dépens du Gouvernement et de tous les administrés, les pensionnés malades. Les allocations ça coûte trop cher, il y a trop de coulage, trop de personnel incompetent. Si l'assistance pour un enfant ça coûte \$1,000 par année, en administration ça coûte \$4,000. C'est la vérité....

Moi je connais bien gros de jeunes de 20 ans à 40 ans qui aiment mieux ne pas travailler et ne cherchent pas d'ouvrage..... Un homme qui a du coeur se trouve de l'ouvrage peu importe le salaire gagné, si il ne peut gagner \$10.00, qu'il en gagne \$5.00. Les professionnels gagnent de \$15,000 à \$25,000 par année et c'est eux qui font le plus de bruit et qui obtiennent le plus. Les fonctionnaires ont le ventre plein, se fichent de ceux qui sont dans la misère, manquent d'argent, de manger, remèdes etc. Il faut que ça change

pour les pensions - on est aussi pire qu'au Biafara, Nigeria, Cuba etc., pauvreté, pensions mal administrées, pas de justice...

Il y a gros de bons garçons mais beaucoup plus de méchants. La religion, quelle qu'elle soit, se pratique bien peu. Je parle en connaissance de quelques choses. J'ai 6 enfants et 3 ne font pas de religion. Je suis assez sévère mais ils font à leur tête, rien pour en venir à bout. Ils veulent prendre leur responsabilité mais c'est pas toujours bon. Les jeunes aiment à vivre au jour le jour et ne pensent pas à leur avenir; cela n'est pas bon. Il faut du sérieux dans la vie. Les jeunes comptent gros de menteries; pas de vérité. On est rendu que l'on est pas capable de se fier à ses enfants. J'ai 52 ans, veuf depuis 8 ans et je suis resté avec 6 enfants: 3 garçons, 3 filles.

Moi je pourrais vous en écrire tout un livre d'injustices. C'est comme une année aux édifices des pensions à Québec, dans une seule bâtisse il y avait près de 3,000 personnes. J'ai constaté qu'il y en a plus qui se promènent au restaurant; ça boit du café, mange et ont gros de plaisir, mais ils n'ont pas le temps de nous renseigner de nous répondre comme il faut. Ils ne connaissent pas les lois.... J'ai pas confiance au personnel...

Ca coûte pour manger aussi cher et même plus cher pour un malade que pour un professionnel - on mange tous par la même place, la bouche....

S'il y a gros de vols, c'est pas fini; cela empire tous les ans. Moi je jongle gros; ce sont les jeunes de 15 à 25 ans qui vont vous conduire par le bout du nez et les vieux passent pour fous incompetents sans expérience. L'expérience ne se vole pas. Pour connaître une chose il faut l'avoir vécue, misère, sacrifices etc. Si ça continue ainsi c'est une guerre civile qui s'en vient.

(c) Observations of Recipients in Respect of Themselves

My own personal problem is boredom and loneliness. Work was my pastime and I miss it. Perhaps social workers could organize over sixty clubs, especially in rural areas. (N.S.)

However, I do periodically go through days of great depression and feel so trapped and confined to something that I feel I can never find a release. (Origin Unknown)

The only way i can answer these questions about the welfare system is to see some one from Welfare.

If i were someone from Welfare i would visit the people who are getting help more often to see how they are getting along.

If i had some other way to make money i would not ask for help, it makes me feel like a bum. (N.S.)

I am 34 yrs old and feel I am trapped no future no husband no chance at future happiness all I have to offer is Kids and Bills. (N.B.)

The constant worry and struggle of making ends meet and constantly being told that there are no jobs available eventually takes its toll. Shattered nerves and short tempers dont help keep an average family together. The father can't help but feel less a man when his wife is on tranquilizers because the pressure is too much to bear and she knows the pills she takes is making money even shorter. Then comes the teenagers who must go to school in clean but patched up hand me downs that are not in the style of the others and shoes always needing replaced and home cut hair. Then the little ones that can't see why they can't have the cereal with the toy in it instead of always porridge, and why can't they have apples and oranges like the other kids. (B.C.)

Being on Welfare is like being on Probation, the only difference, you don't have to worry about a Probation Officer you just haunt yourself, wondering when your Social Worker, will rap on your door, so you try to keep your dwelling neat and clean, yourself & children tidy, so you sit from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. feeling like a spring that is wound to tight, then when you think the spring will unwind then the real worry starts, will the check last untill the end of the month, will the kids be able to go to the show Saturday, will I hear the same question for the tenth time today. (Ont.)

There isn't anyone except my boy who knows I am on welfare and the welfare people themselves.

My mother is over eighty so I could not mention being on welfare to her I think it would kill her.

I have never in my whole life had a vacation not even a week. I dont feel welfare should provide for that sort of thing but I would like to have more food which is essential. (NFLD.)

Kids have to wear welfare glasses. The same for teeth they will pay to have teeth pulled out but they will not pay for fillings who wants to see their teenage daughters going around with their teeth pulled out as all decayed in front. (NFLD.)

I don't consider my self to be on Welfare. On Welfare you have to get a slip of paper from your Welfare Officer to buy your Groceries at the Store you see people paying for their groceries with a slip of paper you know they are on Welfare. As for myself I am a cripple. I am disabled and I receive Social Assistance a cheque each month. (NFLD.)

A friend of mine owns a farm & a house and still receives \$100.00 per month from Welfare. I own no property & receive \$82.85. (Sask.)

But, I am very grateful to get \$150.00 every month. It has taken quite a worry from me. The need of glasses, a filling or any other big need any one of the children, is not such a worry. I can now let my boys join the Scouts and give them the chance to mix with the best of them, keeping them dressed as well as other kids, or pretty close to it. Without it, I dread to think of the hardships and the embarrassment. (NFLD.)

See that all people employed in Sheltered Workshops were given a month supply of bus tickets, a cash grant would only be spent on other things and the recipient would probly walk to work. (Sask.)

Welfare is a very handy thing for families of today. Elderly Aunts and mothers and Dad's are prone to give away their last resources to their children in middle age knowing they can themselves go on welfare or the old age pension. Children are very prone to pop their old folks into Rest Homes and take over the family nest and nest-egg (Lest the government take it for their keep in the homes.) and if the parents resist it's easy to get a committal to a Rest Home, Welfare or other place of retirement from the family doctor. Property is valuable and this is the way of things today. Give it to the children or it will be discounted and taken by the government. (B.C.)

2 years or so ago, when some kids on the street gave me a Victoria School District News Sheet I read an article on the desperate need of Volunteer Aides in the schools. As I was a substitute teacher on Welfare, I offered my services FREE in return for an OPPORTUNITY to be involved. I put in 2½ months SOLID TIME at a school in a depressed area just before said school was torn down earning my Welfare. (B.C.)

If I were a Manager. I would first off take these young people (16-20) group off Welfare, find out why they are not living at home. Then, make an effort to see what they are fit for and get them jobs, so they will become useful citizens, you do nothing, but encourage laziness, so many men on relief, drink from a.m. to p.m. where do they get the money? Welfare cheque of course and baby bonus, the kids have to suffer and the wife does not have things to work with. Some have latest T.V.'s, cars, etc. They say why should I work, when I'm doing all right on Welfare. The Gov't is going broke with all these young people on relief. if you lose your husband, or illness forces you to lose your job. That's the ones that should receive it. (Ont.)

Important also would be a system of educational grants enabling the children of the poor to reach the education level they are capable of handling, right through to the highest level. (Origin Unknown)

We live a mile and a half from the bus stop. So they don't get to school very many days because they have no transportation and we can't get none for them. (NFLD.)

Even some teachers look down on the children too. Especially in High School. When they don't have all the equipment they need. (Origin Unknown)

When a child is 18 yrs of age and have completed grade 12 the welfare now takes money from you. And this child wants to further her education. She is still under my care it is still my duty to help her all I can now my second daughter is ready for college and the welfare now takes 46 dollars a month of my check. She will be living at home for the next two years and I still have to feed, clothe, bus fares for the next two years. How can I do this. (N.S.)

Si l'assisté pouvait gagner un petit montant, tout en recevant son aide, ça l'empêcherait de sombrer dans la paresse et la nonchalance et souvent il se tournerait moins vers la bouteille - N'ayant rien à faire à quoi voulez-vous qu'il passe son temps. A boire, quand c'est pas autre chose. Alors ça occasionne d'autres problèmes de famille, pour d'autres services sociaux. Croyez-moi il faut vraiment être obligé pour se servir de cette loi. (Qué.)

Vive quand le mari travaille.
La vie redevient plus normale.
On respire mieux.
Les enfants sont plus heureux.
On peut établir un budget.
Et l'argent a plus d'effet. (Qué.)

Merci de m'avoir lue - C'est une mère perplexe sur l'avenir qui vous écrit. (Qué.)

Mes impressions d'assisté social: sentiment d'insécurité, de crainte et d'humilié, et c'est ennuyant Recevoir de l'assistance c'est vivre. C'est bon. (Qué.)

(d) Observations of Recipients in Respect of the Welfare System

For welfare workers they should hire people who know what the life is like who have experienced the pitfalls & loneliness that surround a home who is on welfare. (Man.)

Vouchers are a humiliation that inevitably shakes our already shaken self-esteem and hence our confidence without which we cannot get off assistance. (Alb.)

Last year my wife had to have her glasses changed, the welfare would not pay for them, so she went to work for a few days to help pay for them her self. She has a blood disorder her self and should not be working by order's of her doctor, when I went back the next month for my order they took what she had made out of my order. (NFLD.)

Should a Welfare recipient be allowed to take his family for an outing like to the park or a drive in for a hamburger and drink or not. Please let us know. (Man.)

The owners of the Rest Homes often through patronage get licences and buy an old house where wellfare cases are crammed five to a small room placed on tranquilizers and forgotten by their families. (B.C.)

The house leaks when it rains and in the winter time it is very cold in the house. So I would like to get a little bit of money to make the house a little warmer and better than what it is. I only got three bedrooms in the house. Three girls sleep in one bed and two more sleep with me and my wife. (NFLD.)

Welfare Officer's should learn about recipients without looking for the "Gossip-Pot" in a city, town, or village surrounding district. There is proper places for such inquiry. (N.B.)

After 7 months on Welfare my social worker doesn't even want to talk to me. I still get my check but as far as my conditions to why I am on welfare, my Social Worker couldn't care less. (B.C.)

(Welfare) is OK when there is no other way out for us. The people are very good to us. There is twelve of us and my place is only a small place ... There are only two small bedrooms and a small dining room (in) which I sleep. I have to sleep some of the family in the small kitchen at night. The kitchen is falling down around our ears and if we have to stay here this winter we'll freeze to death. (NFLD.)

Considering the case loads are 100-to 1 a social worker I feel they are doing there best. (Man.)

"I (have) often wondered (if) someone from the Dept. (of Welfare) ever tried to find out what happened to me as a person not as a number. If I was dead...they look for these things in the obituary column." (Ont.)

Also when you go see some of the officers you can be prepared for all kinds of insults and insulting questions especially personal ones which I dont think is any of their business. Such as "Are you & Mr. Such and such sleeping together?" and a number of others. (NFLD.)

Real life cannot be lived according to legislation as a lot of rules without a great deal of flexibility. (Unknown Origin)

I would it change in such a way, that for example a man who has no trade, but a family of six or seven would be encouraged to take a low paid job, if he cannot find any better. But for him should be provided a supplementary welfare benefit to lead a decent living.

Unfortunately there is just one choice: either you work and get no welfare or you don't work and you get a handout. (Origin Unknown)

Follow up care when a family is on there feet social workers should keep in contact with a family to see that they are well established instead of closing the file after they are on their way. This way it gives a family the encouragement to succeed. (Man.)

So they start of. How much money did you make in the last twelve months. Have you any money in the bank and so on. They never ask you were you cold last winter or were you hungry, were you getting enough assistance to survive on. They never speak about the cost of living going up. No change in your Financial Circumstances so they close the book. See you next year. It seems to me they are scared one may have a few questions to ask them. (NFLD.)

It is a sad story, that so many people, being willing and able to work, can't find a job.

I think that the government is not doing the right thing to fight inflation with cutting down on jobs.

Also, it would be cheaper for all of us if everybody could produce, instead of taking it from working people and hand it out to less fortunates, like to beggars. (Origin Unknown)

I think Canada Manpower is the worst offender of keeping us on Welfare therefore it should be taken out of their hands and more guidance given to the Social Assistance. (Alb.)

Welfare in itself is not bad. It could be much better if there were more social workers capable of dealing with people who are on welfare. I feel there should be a much better working arrangement between the Social Welfare Dept. and the Manpower center. People who are on Welfare and are employable should be put to work as soon as possible before they lose touch with the working force. (B.C.)

At the start of being on Welfare ten years ago I could have kept on working if there had been assistance to pay a baby sitter.

Later I would have taken a re-training course if the same assistance were available. (Ont.)

If a recipient is willing to work but is unable to have a full time position because of a disability why hold him back from earning on the side? (Sask.)

Seven years ago I've tried desperately to get off welfare and be self-supporting. The only thing I got from Canada Manpower was sneery remarks that I'm too old, every job is for the young, and of course the once over, because I was shabbily dressed & on welfare. I wasn't even given a chance. (Sask.)

For me and my family I would say it would be better if jobs were made in say re- Forrestry of Marginal land even though it could cost twice as much and let every able bodied person work. And this in years to come would bring in revenue. (Sask.)

Je réponds à votre lettre pour donner de mes nouvelles qui sont pas trop bonnes. J'ai à vous dire que je ne travaille pas je ne suis pas capable et j'ai pas la santé. J'ai été malade je suis allée à l'hôpital parce que j'ai eu un petit bébé. J'ai eu peur de ça et je suis bien décourage et je suis bien malade et très nerveusse. Je suis bien découragée de ça. J'ai à vous dire que j'ai plus de chez-nous mes parents ils mon mis dehors, car je ne sais plus quoi faire. J'ai été voir le ministère de la famille et du Bien être social

je les trouvent bien genti pour moi toujours parce que car vous m'aviez bien aidez. Je suis bien contente de la visite de Mme que j'ai eu le plaisir de la voir chez nous. Je termine ma lettre en pensant à vous autres. Je vous dis merci beaucoup. Excusé mon écriture. (Qué.)

Vous qui lirez ces lignes si je vous passais le montant que je reçois pour vivre pendant un mois, je suis certain que vous n'en n'auriez pas pour une semaine, alors vous seriez trois semaines à jeuner. Pour un mois c'est bon pour la ligne, pour la vie, ça devient difficile à supporter et même impossible ... (Qué.)

(e) Observations of Recipients in Respect of the Community in Which They Live and of Society

Have your assistant ever been in one of the homes of a welfare family to see and to listen to the children, the insults and the slurs that the children have to take from some of the people that are more fortunate in health and employment?

For instance my children come home day after day crying because of the insults and abuse from other children their age asking them if they changed their welfare clothes this week. If on such an occasion you think this is exaggerated come anytime to my door and I will provide facts, figures and names of such instances. (N.B.)

In large communities the poor can "hide". In small communities it is possible to kick the poor, since they become known. (Unknown Origin)

I expect my friends will drop me before too long as I have to refuse invitations to the movies, theatre, spending a day at a near-by resort etc. (Alb.)

Most people are kind & polite - shop clerks etc. - but there are despicable types who victimize & terrorize Welfare recipients, specifically, by extorting improper charges by threat of the dire results of a 'report' to the Welfare Department. (Alb.)

In my opinion it is degrading to the moral attitude of both man & women, It is the taking of initiative and ambition. It belittle's the poverty stricken, angers the working taxpayer and Increases tention between the very sick and the poor. (Ont.)

Welfare is bad because it makes us feel like an outcast, when we cash our cheque in the grocery store people look at us as though we were little green people from outer space, and also Grin to each other as much as to say (not you too). They will not cash our cheque unless we have Identification and also calling the manager, which makes it very embarrassing when there are a lot of people behind us waiting. (B.C.)

One thing should be changed is not to live like a prisoner. Have a change to go out once in a while. Like me for instance my sister-in-law took me to Bingo one night and she pay my way. But the next day they call her up and asked her if I went to Bingo. That what I mean be living in prison. Have to be afraid to offer a friend a cup of coffee or lunch. (N.S.)

I was asked why I don't attend church and I told them we are looked down on because of shabby dress and no money to put in the collection plate, so my son and I say our prayers at home. (Sask.)

To be on welfare you are looked down on, and if you makes a move their is always someone to run to the welfare officer to say something about you. It is bad because the welfare officers believe lies and not the truth when other people know that you are on welfare, they don't feel like mixing up with you to start off with, because you can't dress as good as they can because you only have so much money. To spend on a lot of different things when the welfare does anything for you their is always someone to throw it up to you they'll even say it is my tax money is giving you your cheque. (NFLD.)

(Welfare is)...bad because I know that things aren't going to get better. I no longer have contact with people outside of my family and one or two neighbours and, of course, the social worker, doctor. So people don't know I am on welfare. (Ont.)

And lately our neighbours do not seem to be quite as friendly as they used to be, although we were not aware that they knew we were on Welfare but these things have a way of getting around. (B.C.)

Its very hard to live a life of a respectful town tax payer, simply because your not treated that way, they look at you

as if to say, Oh you can cast your vote but doesn't make any difference either way. I am sure it could be kept from other people knowing, but I don't think the social worker tries, Like to-day they promised to send me a return bus ticket to Wpg, to get glasses. Instead of coming here, and bringing the ticket she went to Central Service Station and left a voucher their for a Bus ticket.

Where we only live 2 blocks away from the station. Then the manager of the Service Station phoned me and said (Miss had been there and left a bus voucher for me. And where the manager is known to be a gossip carrier. Thats what I call really broadcasting the fact we're under Welfare. They do the same with the groceries. I can't see why they can't send out a cheque for the same amount and be done with it. And I can't see why the children should go with cloth different from the other children in your school. This only set the child back. And I for one think it is certainly very unfair. (Man.)

One dentist told me he didn't take welfare cases anymore. Another dentist told me to get some one else to remove three stitches. I did it myself. (Ont.)

Since I am on welfare I have spent the most miserable year in all my life even at the grocerie store when you come into it with a welfare cheque they get snobby and look in a funny way at every little thing you buy. (Sask.)

Well to be very truthful it is awful. You will meet new friends and as soon as they know you are on welfare they seem difrent they just stop their children from playing with yours they try to do it in a nice way of course but the bigger children always find out I have a boy 16 he dont want to go back to school he says his closes is not good enough and he will meet new frends who have money from day to day witch I can't give to mine. (NFLD.)

A friend of mine who is a welfare recipient walked in to vote, and one of these upper class women exclaimed, "What are you doing here?" & sarcastically too. My friend answered, "What do you think I'm doing here, I did not come to see you, I came to vote." And you know what she told me later, "To hell on them if I'll go and vote again." Most of us do not bother to vote anymore. (Sask.)

Cependant des gens à l'esprit étroit, égoïste et jaloux disaient que j'étais un paresseux pourtant je souffrais et le temps a prouvé à ces bonnes gens que j'avais raison. puisque je dus subir une grande opération aux jambes pour varices aiguës, qui paralysaient la circulation du sang, et j'en ressens toujours de continuelles souffrances. (Qué.)

